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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 16 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend Claims 2, 8, 9, and 17 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Original) An image processing method comprising:  
a search step of searching storage means for original digital data corresponding to each input image;  
a vectorization step of converting the input image into vector data when no original digital data is found in the search step;  
a storage step of storing the image that has been converted into the vector data in the vectorization step in the storage means as digital data; and  
a sheet generation step of generating a sheet including at least one of information associated with the found original digital data when the original digital data is found in the search step and information associated with digital data which is obtained by converting the image into the vector data in the vectorization step and is stored in the storage step when no original digital data is found in the search step.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information associated with the original digital data or the information associated with the digital data stored in the storage step, which is included in the sheet generated in the sheet generation step, includes a plurality of storage address information relating to a plurality of input images, wherein the storage address information relating to the input image for which

original digital data has been found in the search step is a storage address of the found original digital data, and wherein the storage address information relating to the input image for which no original digital data has been found in the search step is a or a storage address of the digital data stored in the storage step.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the search step includes a step of recognizing an identifier which is appended to the input image and indicates a storage address of the original digital data, and searching for the original digital data on the basis of the recognition result of the identifier.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the vectorization step includes a step of executing vectorization on the basis of a character recognition result of a text block included in the image.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the vectorization step includes a step of executing vectorization by generating outline data based on outlines of significant pixels.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a format conversion step of converting the image that has been converted into the vector data in the vectorization step into a prescribed format which is accessible by an existing document processing application.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the vectorization step includes a step of converting each of objects included in the image into vector data.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information associated with the original digital data or the information associated with the digital data stored in the storage step, which is included in the sheet generated in the sheet generation step, further includes at least one of a thumbnail image, title, abstract, keyword, ID, date, and author of digital data.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising an edit step of editing the information to be laid out on the generated sheet.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the edit step includes a step of editing and generating a new sheet by selecting desired data from the information associated with the original digital data or the information associated with the digital data stored in the storage step, which is included in the sheet.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the edit step includes a step of selecting desired data from the information associated with the original digital data or the information associated with the digital data stored in the storage step, which is included in the sheet, and selecting desired partial information in the selected data, so as to edit the sheet using the selected partial information.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a processing step of displaying an image obtained by scanning the generated sheet, and executing a process on the basis of information associated with digital data selected by the user from the displayed image.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the processing step includes a step of executing a desired process for original digital data or digital data corresponding to information selected by the user.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the information associated with the storage address is described using at least one of a digital watermark and a barcode.

15. (Original) An image processing system comprising:  
search means for searching storage means for original digital data corresponding to each input image;  
vectorization means for converting the input image into vector data when no original digital data is found by said search means;  
save means for storing the image that has been converted into the vector data by said vectorization means in the storage means as digital data; and  
sheet generation means for generating a sheet including at least one of information associated with the found original digital data when the original digital data is

found by said search means and information associated with digital data which is obtained by converting the image into the vector data by said vectorization means and is stored by said save means when no original digital data is found by said search means.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium storing a computer program ~~of claim 16, the computer program making a computer execute:~~

a search step of searching storage means for original digital data corresponding to each input image;

a vectorization step of converting the input image into vector data when no original digital data is found in the search step;

a storage step of storing the image that has been converted into the vector data in the vectorization step in the storage means as digital data; and

a sheet generation step of generating a sheet including at least one of information associated with the found original digital data when the original digital data is found in the search step and information associated with digital data which is obtained by converting the image into the vector data in the vectorization step and is stored in the storage step when no original digital data is found in the search step.